

# Chronic Disease

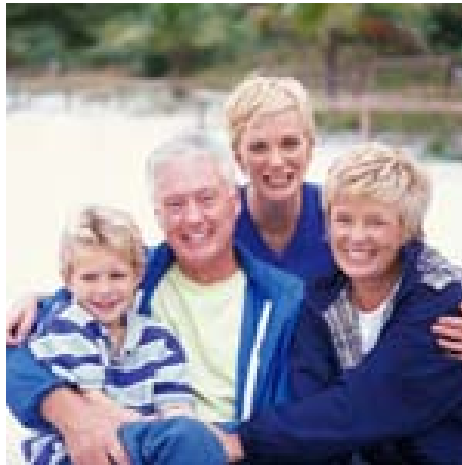
- Chronic disease, such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes, is the leading cause of death in the United States (US).
- Approximately 7 out of 10 deaths in the US are due to chronic disease.

The good news is that many chronic diseases can be prevented or controlled by:

- Walking;
  - Eating healthy;
  - Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight and;
  - Not smoking,
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- Regular moderate-intensity physical activity such as a 30 minute brisk walk, 5 or more days per week, can improve your health and well-being. This small change adds up to big health rewards.
  - If you have a chronic disease, it is important to check with a health care professional **before** beginning ANY type of physical activity program.

## Resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp)
- American Association for Active Lifestyles and Fitness: [www.aahperd.org](http://www.aahperd.org)
- New Hampshire Trails, Hiking, Walking, Backpacking and Camping: [www.pccs-nh.com/trails/index.shtml](http://www.pccs-nh.com/trails/index.shtml)



# Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention

- Substance abuse is preventable and addiction is treatable.
- Addiction does not happen just to 'bad' or 'morally weak' people; it is a disease that touches us all and is the number one preventable adolescent health problem.
- As parents and caregivers we are much more powerful than we think.
- Parents are the number one reason why kids do not use drugs or alcohol.
- Talk with your kids early and set clear rules, teach them often about making healthy life choices and care enough to stay closely involved in their lives.
- If you or someone you know is concerned about substance abuse, there is help. Join the millions of people who have recovered their health and turned their lives around.
- Call for more information on alcohol and other drugs, talking with kids, and/or where to get help. 1-800-804-0909 (NH).



# Arthritis

- The second leading cause of work disability, arthritis, is a group of more than 100 different diseases that affect areas in or around joints (where two or more bones meet).
- Arthritis causes pain, loss of movement and sometimes swelling.
- Many people diagnosed with arthritis don't know there are steps they can take to help improve their health, mental outlook and decrease their overall pain level.
- Physical activity can help lessen pain, increase range of movement, reduce fatigue and help you feel better overall.
- Specially trained health professionals can show you range-of-motion exercises and strengthening exercises that are especially helpful if you have arthritis.
- A healthy body weight will help you feel better too! Every extra pound you carry around adds stress to your knees and hips.
- Excess weight can mean more pain if you have arthritis as well as contribute to and increase your risk of certain types of arthritis.





# Asthma



- Asthma is a chronic lung disease that can be successfully controlled with proper care.
- Common symptoms include coughing, chest tightness, wheezing and shortness of breath.
- Asthma can be serious, but people with asthma can stay healthy and lead fully active lives.
- "Triggers" provoke asthma symptoms or make asthma worse.
- Common triggers include dust mites, pets, pollen, mold, cockroaches, fumes, secondhand smoke, weather and exercise.
- Triggers can vary for different people and reducing exposure to them helps keep asthma under control.
- Physical activity can trigger asthma symptoms in some people, but someone who has their asthma under control can benefit from regular exercise.
- People should work with their doctors to fit physical activity into their asthma management plan.
- Staying active and maintaining a healthy weight are important steps to being healthy.

## Resource:

AsthmaNow NH Website:

[www.asthmanow.net](http://www.asthmanow.net)

# Cancer

- Research shows that moderate physical activity most days of the week will reduce the risk of colon and breast cancer. Physical activity may also help reduce the risk of certain other cancers.

## Physical activity may reduce cancer risk by:

- Making the immune system stronger;
  - Shortening the time it takes food to move through the intestines;
  - Changing body composition and changing hormone levels.
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- Physical activity helps cancer patients overcome fatigue from chemotherapy and helps improve strength and endurance for patients who have radiation therapy or chemotherapy.
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- Cancer patients report an improved attitude including a renewed feeling of empowerment when adopting a physically active lifestyle. Both of these are important measures of quality of life after cancer surgery or other therapy.
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- Cancer patients should ask their doctors about what types of physical activities they can do.

## Resource:

American Cancer Society: [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)



# Diabetes and Pre-Diabetes

- Diabetes is a chronic disease in which blood glucose (sugar) levels are above normal.
- High sugar levels can lead to problems such as heart disease, stroke, vision loss, kidney disease and nerve damage.
- Being overweight and inactive greatly increases your risk for developing type 2 diabetes (the most common form of diabetes).
- Pre-diabetes is a condition where you have higher than normal blood glucose levels, but not diabetes.
- Studies show people at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes (those who have pre-diabetes) can often prevent the disease by losing as little as 5% of their body weight. This can be done by eating healthier foods and getting at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week.
- Work with your health care provider, friends and family to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- You CAN prevent type 2 diabetes and stay healthy!

For more information contact:

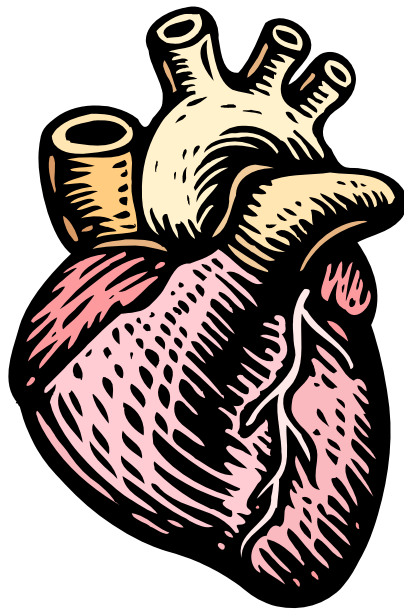
[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)



# Heart Disease

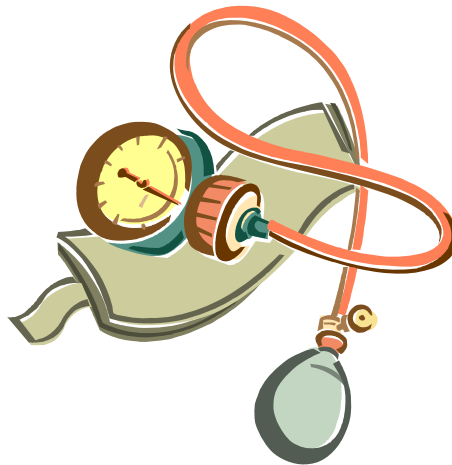
- Heart disease (or cardiovascular disease) is a leading cause of death in the United States and 25% of Americans are living with the disease.
- Heart disease occurs when the heart, arteries and veins do not send enough oxygen to the brain and other vital organs. Without oxygen, the tissues or organs will die.
- Two major risk factors for developing heart disease are high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol. Ask a healthcare professional how often to check these and do it regularly.
- People who are active are less likely to get heart disease, have high blood pressure or high blood cholesterol.

**Regular physical activity, eating a healthy diet and not smoking are ways to help reduce heart disease!**



# High Blood Pressure

- High blood pressure (hypertension) is one of the major risk factors for developing heart disease.
- Approximately 90% of middle-aged Americans will develop high blood pressure in their lifetime and over 70% of people with high blood pressure do not have it under control.
- Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to stroke, heart attack, heart failure or kidney failure.
- Many people who have high blood pressure don't know they have it! This is why high blood pressure is often called the "silent killer."
- Everyone should have their blood pressure regularly checked by a health care professional.
- Physical activity can help prevent you from getting high blood pressure.
- If your blood pressure is already high, physical activity can help keep it under control.
- Physical activity makes your heart stronger which means it can pump blood more easily. When your heart works less hard, there is less pressure on your arteries.





# Mental Health

Physically active people tend to have better mental health. They have higher self-esteem and a more positive outlook on life.

## Physical activity:

- Helps reduce feelings of anxiety, depression, stress and insomnia;
- Lowers levels of sadness, tension and anger;
- Improves resistance to mental health disease in healthy people;
- Causes the body to release 'natural' antidepressants known as endorphins. This leads to an increase in feelings of well-being and happiness.
- Leads to an increase in energy and to better sleep patterns.
- Helps stretch tense muscles, deepen breathing and alter a person's biochemistry to promote mental health.

There is also some research that indicates a physically active lifestyle may be linked with higher levels of alertness and mental ability, including the ability to learn!



# Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a bone disease that can lead to increased risk for fractures of the hip, spine and wrist.

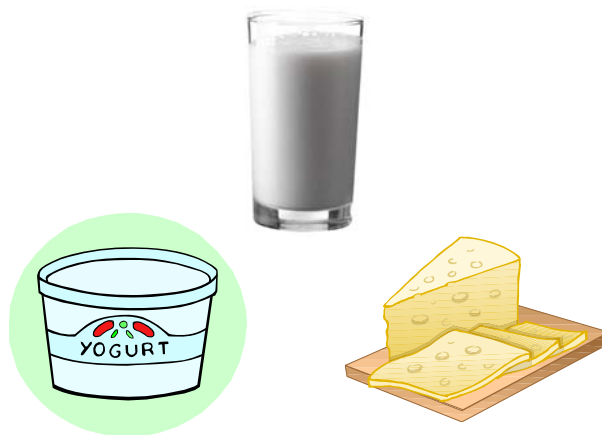
To reduce your risk:

- Increase **physical activity**;
- Eat a diet high in calcium and vitamin D;
- Do NOT smoke and limit alcohol.

Other risks related to age, gender, race and early menopause cannot be changed. Focus on all the risks you *CAN* change like physical activity.

Bone density testing is a simple, painless test that measures your bone density, diagnoses osteoporosis and predicts your risk of fractures. It also shows if osteoporosis medicines are helping your bones.

Regular physical activity like walking, helps keep your bones strong. It promotes new bone formation; increases joint strength; improves balance to prevent falls and helps you maintain good posture.



# Stroke

- Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States.
- A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts. When part of the brain can't get the blood and oxygen it needs, it starts to die.
- Many people do not recognize the warning signs of stroke and therefore delay seeking immediate medical attention.
- The more quickly medical attention is obtained, the earlier treatment can begin.
- Early treatment of stroke **GREATLY** increases chances of survival as well as helps reduce long-term disability.
- Warning signs of stroke include:
  - Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg (especially on one side of the body);
  - Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding;
  - Sudden trouble seeing (in one or both eyes);
  - Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination; and
  - Sudden, severe headache (with no known cause).
- Being active and maintaining a healthy weight can reduce risk factors for having a stroke.



# Tobacco

- Smoking is the most preventable cause of death worldwide.
- Smoking increases your chances of developing lung disease, heart disease, stroke and a variety of other conditions.
- If you do not smoke, or smoked in the past and have since quit - Congratulate Yourself!
- If you currently smoke, quitting is one of the most important things you can do to improve your health.
- Best of all, the benefits are immediate:
  - Twenty minutes after quitting your heart rate drops (which means your heart is not working as hard as it was when you were smoking);
  - Twelve hours after quitting, the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal, a big help to your lungs;
  - And the list of benefits goes on!
- Most smokers want to quit. If you would like help, call **1-800-TRY-TO-STOP** (1-800-879-8678). All available services including three counseling sessions are free.
- Once you are smoke free, increasing your physical activity will improve your health and fill some of the time you used to take up with smoking.

